BIG FOUR TRAIN WENT THROUGH THE BRIDGE

Terre Haute Evening Gazette Feb. 1900

An Engine And Thirty-Nine Cars Are in The Wabash River.

Engineer Adams, Fireman Ruddel and Brakeman Whiteman Badly Hurt, The Latter Probably Fatally.

There were 49 cars in the train, not counting the caboose, as there are only eleven cars standing on the other side this would make 89 cars that went in the river. This estimate was obtained from Col. South at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

At 4 p. m. the indications were that both Ruddel, the fireman, and Whiteman, the brakeman, would die. Adams, the engineer, is least hurt.

At 2:35 this afternoon Big Four freight train No. 96, which left Mattoon at 10 o'clock this morning and which was due to arrive here at 2:15 this afternoon, fell in the Wabash river, the west span of the bridge giving way and part of the draw going with it.

The engine and all but eleven cars fell in. As there are supposed to be between thirty and forty cars in the train it is certain that between twenty and thirty cars are in the river.

The wreck makes an ugly heap as it is piled up on the west side of the bridge.

The engineer, fireman and brakeman fell in with the train and all are quite badly injured.

Engineer Harry Adams, of Brightwood, near Indianapolis, was on engine 440.

The floating ice and the high water caused the bridge to go down. The river is filled with floating ice. The employees of the water works company say they saw the bridge swaying back and forth just before the train fell.

The names of the train crew who went in the river are:

HARRY ADAMS, the engineer.

DAN RUDDEL, the fireman.

GEO. WHITEMAN, the brakeman.

Adams was taken to the Union hospital considerably injured. Ruddell was taken to St. Anthony's hospital. He is also badly hurt. Whiteman, the brakeman, is probably fatally hurt. He is not expected to live. He was taken to the Union hospital.

The terrible catastrophe that would have resulted had the Knickerbocker run over the bridge instead of the freight train is absolutely appalling. The Knickerbocker was sent around on its way east by way of Paris and the Peoria division of the Vandalia. The east bound Big Four passenger train was also sent around in the same way.

The wreck looks worse from the west side of the river. Cars are piled up one over the other and the ice was floating down with fearful rapidity.

The accident naturally recalls the time the same bridge went down with Engineer Allison, his body being carried down the river and being found months later.

The engine that went down was No. 440.

The telegraph wires were broken down when the bridge fell and telegraph communication was interrupted on the Big Four. At 3:15 o'clock telegraph operators from the Big Four office went over on the other side, in company with a Gazette writer, to stretch the line and restore communication.

Adams is married and so is Ruddell. The latter also lives at Brightwood. Whiteman formally lived at Worthington. He is single.

The ice gorge above the bridge broke this morning and had been crashing against the bridge piers for several hours before the accident occurred. No [illegible] were visible but the [illegible]

ing had weakened the piers or shaken the hold of the superstructure. At any rate when the east bound freight ran on to it at 2:30 o'clock this afternoon, it had no sooner reached the draw, which is the first span on the west side, there was a warning crash and then the locomotive tumbled into the river. Five cars were drawn in after it. But then the train was running slow all of the fifteen cars constituting the the train might have followed.

The locomotive in tumbling turned partially over on the side striking the ice almost head on crashing through it with a frightful noise, throwing the broken ice and water spray in every direction. And as the cars fell on top they broke up partially and falling over from the heap sank partly under the water.

Other cars of the train stood on the trestle, the forward one perilously near the yawning chasm made by the broken span.

In a few minutes, [illegible] everywhere people gathered on shore, attracted by the terrific noise and the work of rescue began. The engineer and firman were gotten out from the wreck of cars and carried to the [illegible]. Both men were unconscious and horribly bruised and scarred. Whether or not they have been internally injured is not known, but it is hoped they have not, and may recover.

The span that gave way was the first from the west side and is known as the draw. In the accident of a few years ago when a freight went through the same bridge it was the span next east of the one that gave way today.

No cause for the accident is known except that the bridge had been weakened by the heavy impact of great masses of swiftly moving ice that had been plunging against it this morning. Apparently, however, this had had no effect, but as a matter of fact, as the event shows, it had been disastrously effective.

After the former accident the bridge was thoroughly overhauled in repairing it and it was regarded as one of the safest and strongest bridges to be found anywhere. The calamity was therefore as unexpected as it is deplorable.

Terre Haute

THURSDAY, MARCH 1 1900. TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA,

THIRTY-SIX CARS WENT DOWN IN WRECK

All Were Loaded and The Total Damage to The Big Four Will be at Least $100,000.

Superintendent W. M. Duane, of the Big Four, said today to a Gazette writer:

"We put a hundred men to work repairing the broken span of the bridge today and we will put another shift of another hundred on tonight. We expect to have the span repaired so that

Charles Baldwin, who has boats to rent on the river bank, and his wife tried to stop the train, as they noticed it was swaying to and fro, but they were not in time to do it, although they tried to do so.

BIG FOUR OFFICIALS HERE.

The following Big Four general officials arrived last night and at once assumed personal charge of the wreck and the repair of the bridge:

General Manager C. E. Schaff, of Cincinnati, who came in his private car.

Chief Engineer G. W. Kittridge, of Cincinnati.

Superintendent W. M. Duane, of Mattoon.

Trainmaster G. M. French, of Mattoon.

Cairo di[illegible] a pile driver on the other si[illegible] master Gorman and thirty-five [illegible] rived from the Mattoon di[illegible]

A rumo[illegible] he tramps who were stealing [illegible] ent down with the wreck is [illegible] ned.

SUPT. [illegible]'S STATEMENT.

Superinte[illegible] Duane said: "The pier whi[illegible] way has been standing for [illegible] thirty years, and to all appearance[illegible] as good as the day it was put in[illegible] manner in which it was under[illegible] precluded all possibility of its [illegible]on being discovered in time to av[illegible]e accident. The water had sapp[illegible] foundations far down below the w[illegible]r line and until the weight of [illegible]rain disclosed the fact that the st[illegible]ure was unsafe we had no knowl[illegible] it."

CONDUCTOR SHORT'S STORY.

L. E. Sh[illegible] of Mattoon, was the conductor in [illegible]harge of the ill-fated train and [illegible] riding in the caboose with the [illegible]hen when the bridge gave way.

The brak[illegible] with rare courage and presence [illegible]ind, sprang out on the platform and set the brakes, his action preventing the [illegible]ozen or more cars now standing on the track from plunging into the river with the rest.

Conductor Short says there were forty-nine freight cars in the train and all fell into the river except thirteen. The conductor jumped as soon as the brakes were set and the brakeman did likewise, both escaping without a scratch.

Conductor Short is beginning to think he bears a charmed life, as he was in a smash-up a week ago today and came out unhurt. He was riding in his caboose, the same as yesterday, when a wreck occurred, in which his car was totally demolished. Short jumped for his life and stood by while his

from one side to the other igniting the cotton, and the flames, which were only small for a time, soon spread and the fire became so threatening that it was necessary to call out the fire department to save the bridge. A car of oil and the fourteen cars loaded with baled cotton helped to spread the flames, which gave much annoyance to the wrecking crews, that had by this time reached the scene in large numbers. The fire for a time looked as if it might burn the bridge down, but at 2 o'clock the fire was under control.

DR. CASTO BREAKS INTO IT.

One car load of cotton floated down the river and got stuck at the wagon bridge at Main street. Dr. J. C. Casto, of recent fire notoriety, took charge of the cotton by "right of discovery on the river" and when General Agent South sent Isaac Woods with a team and four men down to the wagon bridge to haul the cotton up to the freight house Casto refused to give up possession of it. Casto is tsill holding the cotton and General Agent South at 2:30 o'clock said he would call the attention of General Manager Schaff, who is here, to the matter.

Brakeman John Whiteman's home is at Mattoon, but he has been boarding at Indianapolis. Ruddell was a pominent member of the B. of L. F.

SOUTHWESTERN LIMITED SAVED.

A fortunate combination of circumstances is responsible for the fact that the loss of life is not something horrible. Train No. 11, which is the Southwestern limited, one of the fast-flying passenger trains over the road, had or-

trains can pass over within five days. If the ice was not so bad and the weather was better we could have trains over in three days. The delay to through Big Four travel will be an hour."

General Agent E. E. South gave th following statement to the Gazette : noon:

"There were thirty-six cars that went down in the wreck, so that the Gazette's estimate of thirty-nine cars last night was not far from correct." '

The Big Four bridge wreck Friday afternoon was the reigning sensation today, but the sudden cold turn in the weather kept the crowds down that visited the wreck this morning. The Big Four officials acted with the greatest promptitude, fully in keeping with the magnitude of the disaster, for, it is estimated that outside of the serious inconvenience to Big Four travel, the pecuniary loss to the company will be in the neighborhood of $100,000.

DEATH OF FIREMAN RUDDELL.

About 8 o'clock last night Fireman Dan Ruddell died at St. Anthony's hospital. He was fearfully mangled. His wife came over from Indianapolis on the Vandalia train, arriving here at 9 o'clock last night and was driven at once to the hospital, but she was too late, for the unfortunate man had expired an hour earlier. The grief of the heartbroken wife was touching and those who saw her had difficulty themselves in restraining their tears. Mrs. Ruddell was accompanied from Indianapolis by her sister. The remains were sent to Brightwood this morning on Big Four train No. 4, which left here at 9:13 o'clock, and were in charge of passenger conductor McClellan, of Indianapolis, who is a brother-in-law of the deceased fireman. Ruddell was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and leaves four children besides a wife. He was about 36 years old. The remains were taken in charge by Undertaker Ryan last night. Ruddell was a Catholic and died with the ministrations of the church, Father Zabo ministering to him.

SAW IT, BUT TOO LATE.

Coroner Willis said to a Gazette writer:

"Ruddell before he died said the engineer and himself saw that the bridge was out of plumb before they struck and the engineer tried his best to stop the train, but they were going too fast and they could do nothing."

toon.

Engineer of Maintenance of Way J. W. Cowper, of Mattoon.

Most of the above officials are expected to remain here till the bridge is up. They were all still here this afternoon.

THIRTY-SIX CARS WENT DOWN.

When the wrecked train left Mattoon sterday morning at 10 o'clock for re Haute there were forty-nine cars the train, besides two cabooses. The train was composed of forty-five loaded cars, four empties and two cabooses. Thirty-six cars went down in the river, loaded as follows:

Loaded with spelter	1
Merchandise	3
Baled cotton ... .14	
Bran.....	2
Meal....	1
Paper wrappers...	1
Stove ovens..	1
Bulk middlings....	2
Pig lead..	1
Bulk clay..	1
Lumber 3	
Corn	3
Oil	1
Wood	1
Empty oil tank..	1
Total 36	

IN PERSONAL CHARGE.

Chief Engineer Kitteridge will assume personal supervision of the building of the wrecked span. Superintendent of Motive Power William Garstang, of Indianapolis, came over last night with Mrs. Ruddell and her sis-

The Big Four is only refusing perishable freight. Passenger trains will leave the Big Four passenger station as usual and will take the Peoria division track of the Vandalia for Paris. At Paris the same course will be pursued.

A telephone message from the Union hospital at noon said: "Whiteman is still unconscious and in a bad way. Adams is in a good way to recovery."

Dr. T. W. Moorhead, Big Four surgeon in Terre Haute, has personal charge of the injured men.

VANDALIA HELPS OUT.

The Big Four's gang of bridge men that arrived today came from the Chicago, Michigan, Peoria and Cairo divisions. In addition to drawing on these systems for their best bridge men, the Vandalia line, with its characteristic cleverness, has offered to furnish the Big Four with almost forty of its selected bridge men and the offer has been accepted by the Big Four with thanks.

Trainmaster French announced today that until the bridge was repaired a local train will run each way, morning and afternoon, between Paris and St. Mary's.

Ed Pursian, head of the pile driver gang, and twenty-five men, with a pile driver, arrived today from the Michigan division of the Big Four. The caboose was being ground to pieces.

TRAMPS ON THE TRAIN.

George Wilson, Harry Brown and Charles Williams, a trio of tramps, were in one of the middle cars when the bridge collapsed, but managed to get out unhurt. When the engine went down there was a jar which shook the entire train and the tramps sprang to their feet and looked out. They made haste in getting out and a few seconds after they reached the ground their car had plunged into the river and became a part of the wreckage under the water. The three men were given lodging at the jail last night and left the city this morning. They said they boarded the train at Paris and so far as they knew there was no other tramps in any of the cars.

ENGINEER ADAMS TALKS.

Engineer Harry Adams tells the following story of the wreck at the Union hospital:

"When we came around the curve just before going on the bridge the fireman said to me 'All right,' which means that the bridge was clear. He could not get a full view of the bridge, but did not then see anything that was not all right. We were going at about ten miles an hour when the engine went on the bridge. Just as we touched it Ruddell cried out, 'My God, look out!' I looked out the window and saw that the track was out of line and threw down my seat, expecting to jump, but the next thing I knew I felt the cold water and found myself paddling around in the water. I got a hold on something and knew that I could keep from sinking. I heard Ruddell groaning and called to him. He said that he was fast and burning. He told me to tell his wife and children that his last thoughts were of them and I promised him I would, but told him that there was help at hand, and that he must not lose his nerve. He became so weak that he could not keep his head out of water and I threw him a board. He rested his head on the board, and that is all I remember. I do not know how I got out, but they tell me that I walked on the ice, and after they pulled me on the bridge that I walked to the bank. The fireman was parboiled, I am sure, as he was jammed between the coal-gate and the fire-door. He could not move and the escaping steam must have burned him. He tried to jump when he called to me, and was out of his seat and just ready to go when he went down. The brakeman had just left the cab, and was either going over the tank or was on the first car. I did not see nor hear anything of him after we were in the water. If anyone knew of the dangerous condition of the bridge they did not try to flag us."

THE WRECK TAKES FIRE.

About 1[illegible] o'clock this morning the wrecked cars in the river took fire, from a sky rocket that was fired with a line

ders to meet train No. 8, which is a local passenger train east from Mattoon, at St. Mary's. Conductor Short of the wrecked train saw he had time to make Duane for No. 11, which accounts for the high rate of speed at which the train was running. Had he decided to take a siding west of the river to wait for the past passenger, as would not have been out of the ordinary, the Southwestern limited, with its freight of human souls, would have been hurled to the bottom of the river. Another coincidence that probably saved two lives was the breaking down of engine No. 438. When the train was ordered it had been decided to run it as a double-header to Terre Haute. The repairs on No. 38 could not be completed in time, hence the train was run with a single engine. The trainmentwho escaped went to their homes at Indianapolis last night on the Knickerbocker, which was run from Paris to Terre Haute over the tracks of the T. H. & P.

GETTING ACCOMMODATIONS.

Houses in the north end in the vicinity of the Big Four depot were being scoured today for accommodations for the several hundred men of the various wrecking crews that are here. Monninger and Dressler are feeding most of the men, but the men on the other side of the river have their own cars and all they have to be furnished is the supplies.

MAND FREEZES ON TO TWO BALES

J. W. Mand has two bales of cotton at his store on west Main street that he also claims. He says he caught them as they floated down the river and he refuses to give them up. J. W. Bridges, an employ of Jordan's poultry house and Alex McAfee, of 114 south First street, say they caught the cotton and that Mand has "tried to buy them off." Mand wants the railroad company to give him $10 apiece for the two bales of cotton.

LIVED AS NEIGHBORS.

Engineer Adams and fireman Ruddell both lived as neighbors at Brightwood. Ruddell was caught in the gangway of the engine and pinned down under the wreckage. He was fast against the boilerhead and his entire body was scalded from the escaping steam. As soon as he saw the bridge was going away Brakeman Whiteman started back on the train, but only reached top of the tank when the crash came. He was caught between the first car and the engine and both of his legs were badly crushed. When he was taken to the hospital he was unconscious and it took two men to hold him in bed. It is supposed the scenes leading up to the wreck were causing him, in his delirium to make strong efforts to escape.

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Continued on Twelfth Page.

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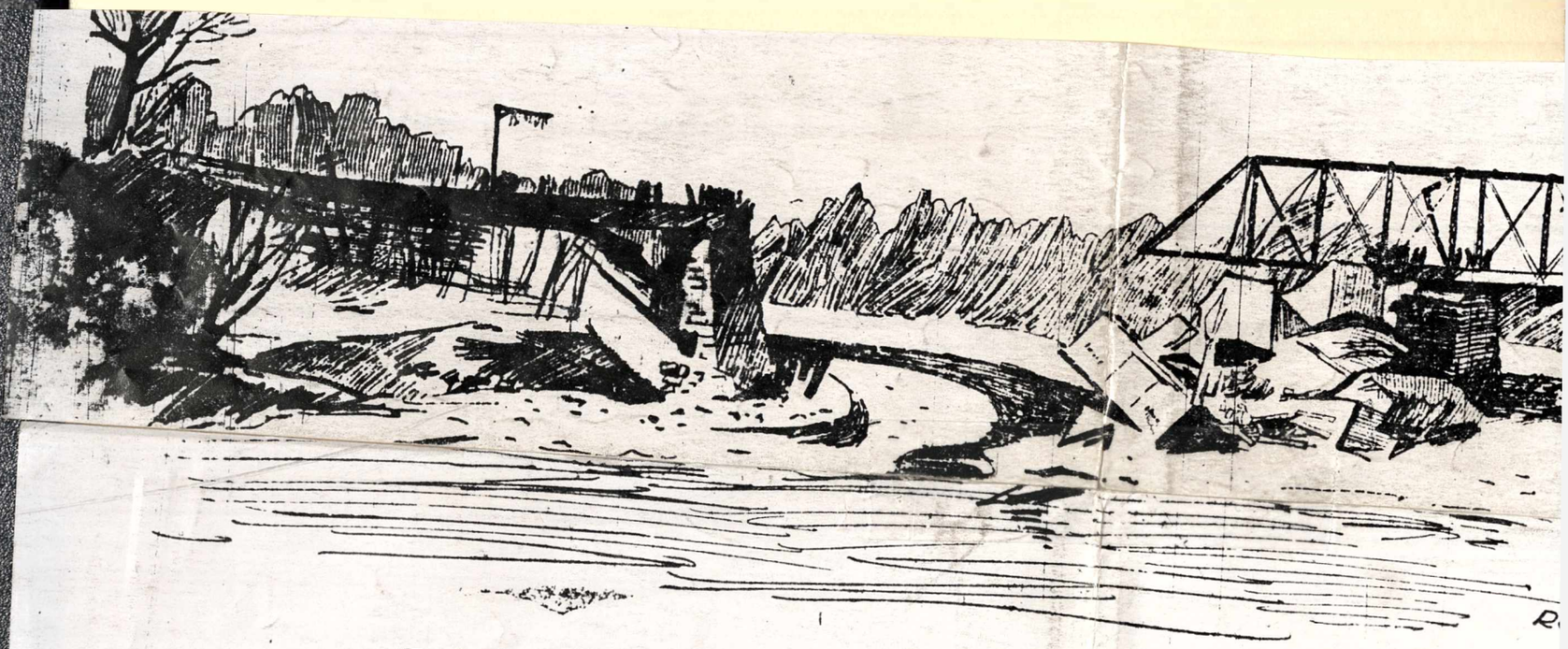
(Continued from Ninth Page.)

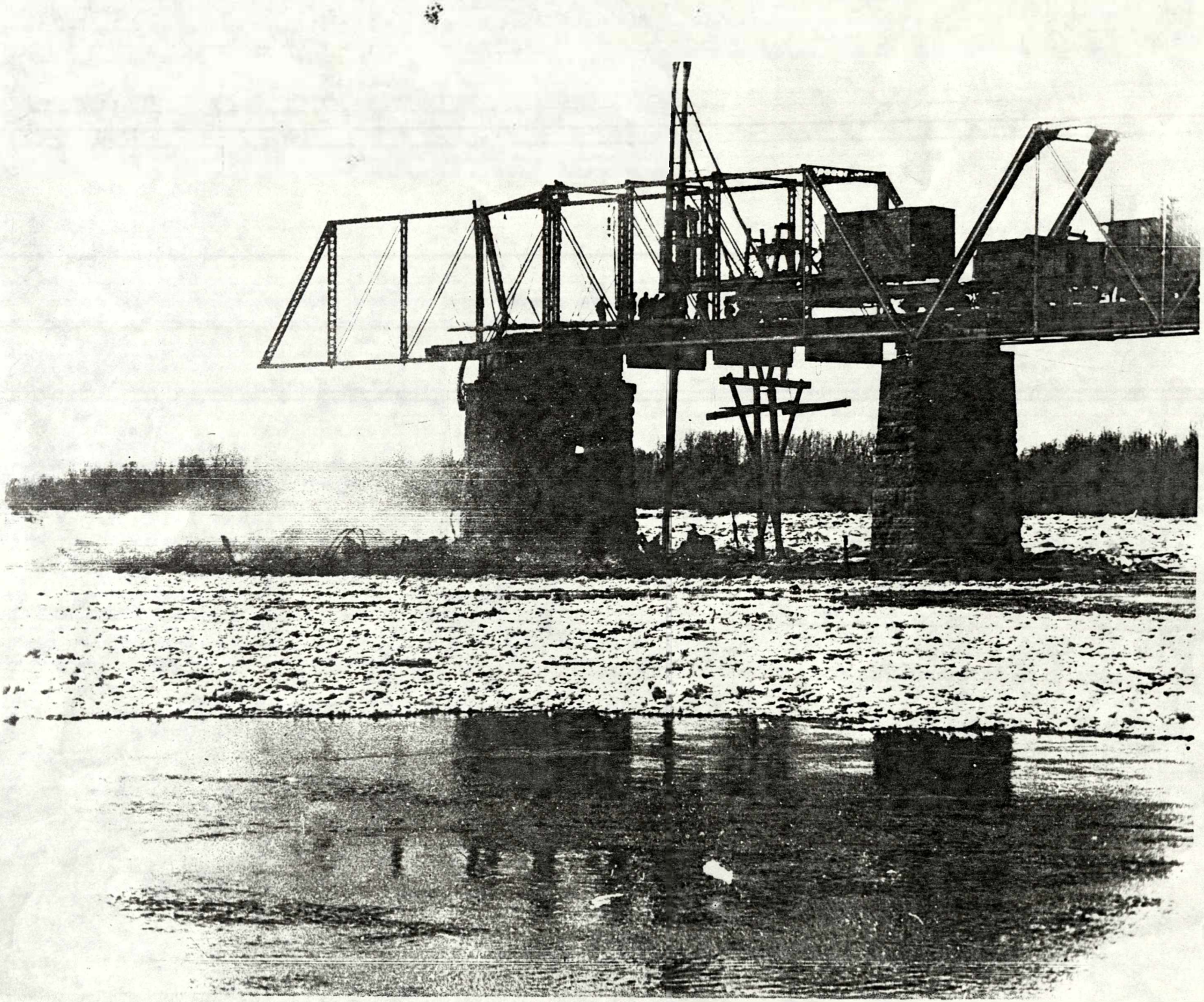
brakeman was in the cupola of the caboose and saw the head of the train go down. He ran to a caboose ahead, in which was another train crew, consisting of J. M. Lareh, F. J. Bowers and John Wohrley, all of Indianapolis, and told them to jump for their lives, which they did and none were hurt.

The bridge which went down is a five span bridge and has been built for about twenty-six years. The pier that gave way was the first in the stream from the west bank and the engine struck the next pier east and rested against it, which probably accounts for the fact that the engineer was not drowned. An ice gorge had formed and the water about the bridge was sixty-four feet deep in one place. When the bridge was built it was necessary to go down 200 feet in order to secure a solid foundation for the piers on account of quicksand.

Supt. Hyland notified the Big Four railroad company today to stop by all means the fire at the wreck, as the floating burning debris was a source of danger to the industries down the river.



The Scene of Friday's Wreck on the Big Four.



1900 Bridge Collapse

(VCPL Does Not Have
Original Photo)